

CANCELED CLAIMS

Please cancel claim 4 and claims 6-21 without prejudice.

NEW CLAIM

Please add new claim 22 as follows:

22. A system for distributing connections from clients on an external network to a plurality of servers on an internal network, the system comprising:

means for receiving and sending packets to and from a remote client;

means for receiving and sending packets to and from a plurality of servers, the plurality of servers being operative to establish a connection with the remote client;

means for monitoring connections established between the plurality of servers and clients on the external network, the means for monitoring connections comprising means for gathering response time data at the system in the course of monitoring connections between the plurality of servers and clients on the external network;

means for predicting the response time of each of the plurality of servers based at least in part on response time data gathered at the system in the course of monitoring connections established between the plurality of servers and clients on the external network; and

means for comparing the predicted response time of each of the plurality of servers to select a pointer to a server which has a predicted response time of the plurality of servers.

whereby the server that has predicted response time is selected to handle the next connection from a client.

CLEAN COPY OF AMENDED CLAIMS

1. (Amended) A system for distributing connections from clients on an external network to a plurality of servers on an internal network, the system comprising:

a client interface to the external network the client interface being operative to receive and send packets to and from a remote client;

a server interface to the internal network, the server interface being operative to receive and send packets to and from a plurality of servers, the plurality of servers being operative to establish a connection with the remote client and the system being configured to monitor connections established between the plurality of servers and clients on the external network;

a plurality of predicted responsiveness indicators, each of the plurality of predicted response indicators being associated with at least one of the plurality of servers, the predicted responsiveness indicators being operative to predict the response time of each of the plurality of servers based at least in part on response time data gathered at the system in the course of monitoring connections established between the plurality of servers and clients on the external network, the predicted responsiveness indicators also being stored within the system in a manner that the predicted responsiveness indicators may be accessed; and

a predicted responsiveness comparator which is operative to access and compare the predicted responsiveness indicators and to determine which servers from among the plurality of servers is associated with a predicted responsiveness indicator which measures a best response time, the predicted responsiveness comparator being further operative to select a pointer to a server which has a predicted responsiveness that is the best predicted responsiveness among the predicted responsiveness of the plurality of servers.

whereby the server which has a predicted responsiveness which is the best predicted responsiveness is selected to handle the next connection from a client.